

MONDAY, 29TH NOVEMBER, 1875.

WILLIAM MACLEAY, ESQ., PRESIDENT, in the Chair.

MEMBERS ELECTED.

Hugh Kennedy, Esq., University; A. Dodds, Esq; Francis Lark, Esq., Sydney.

Mr. E. P. RAMSAY read the following papers :—

Characters of a new genus and species of Passerine bird, from the Fiji Islands, proposed to be called VITIA.

This is an interesting passerine form, which appears to be allied to *Synallaxis* on the one hand, and *Troglodytes* on the other. I have not yet determined to which family of the Passeres it most properly belongs, but for the present I place it among the Troglodytes (*Troglodytidae*, *Sclater*.) I can find no *genus* in any of the works at my disposal, *Grey's Genera of Birds* included, into which I can place it with any degree of certainty, and although much averse to forming new genera, I do not see how I can possibly avoid it, unless by leaving it for some one else to do. I therefore propose to form, for the reception of the present species, the genus *Vitia* which may be thus characterised.

Bill as long, or about the same length as the head, straight, comparatively strong, as wide as high at the base, compressed laterally past the nostrils, culmen very slightly curved to the tip, which is entire

Nostrils, lateral, basal, placed in a longitudinal groove; the opening oblong, partially covered with membrane; distance between the anterior margin of nostril and tip of the bill nearly equal to the distance between the nostrils and angle of the mouth.

Wings, short, 1st quill about one-half the length of 2nd; 2nd one-fourth shorter than 3rd, which is about equal to the 9th; the 4th, 5th, and 6th about equal and longest; the 7th and 8th very little less; the remainder gradually decreasing to the innermost secondary.

Tail, of ten feathers, long, graduated, somewhat rounded—the lateral feathers only slightly (*one-fifth*) shorter than the central.

Tarsus, long, about one-third shorter than the *tibia*, slender, scales obsolete; hind toe, long, strong; the claw equal to the length of the toe; lateral toes uneven, the inner shorter than the outer, *with its claw* about equal to the length of the middle *without its claw*; outer toe joined to centre toe from about the middle of first joint.

In the formation of the wings and legs this genus resembles that of *Malurus* and *Sericornis*.

VITIA RUFICAPILLA, *Nov. Sp.*

Adult Male.—The whole of the head rufous, paler rufous on the sides of the face; the throat, chest and centre of the abdomen ashy white; the sides of the neck and of the body, light ashy brown, becoming browner at the flanks and under tail-coverts; tail underneath brown crossed by numerous indistinct narrow wavy bars of darker tint, seen only in certain lights, above dark brown, with a slight tinge of reddish brown or inner margins of the quills; wings below brown, the quills margined with whitish along the inner webs towards the base; under wing-coverts white, wings above dark brown, slightly tinged with reddish brown on the outer margins of the quills and upper wing-coverts; lower hind neck, back and remainder of the upper surface brown, with a slight reddish brown tinge on the wings and upper tail-coverts. Bill dark horn-brown, lower mandible whitish, legs and feet light brown, iris brown; total length, 4·8 inches; wing, 2·4; tail, 2·5; tarsus, 0·97; bill from forehead, 0·7; from angle of the mouth, 0·72; from nostril, ·4; height at nostril, 0·2; width, 0·2.

Adult Female.—In size and plumage same as the male.

This species was found at Kandavu, in the Fiji group. It was discovered in pairs traversing the more open parts on the sides of the ranges, flitting from bush to bush, and emitting a weak monosyllabic note. When separated they use a rather loud call note.